

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 SCCT-01 AID-05 SY-04 IO-10 SAM-01

SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12

OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-01 NIC-01 /103 W

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R 290934Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 207

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

CONFIDENTIAL MANILA 1282

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS DENOUNCES MUSLIM REBEL VIOLATION OF
"CEASEFIRE"

REF: MANILA 818

1. SUMMARY: IN JAN 28 SPEECH PRESIDENT MARCOS ACCUSED MUSLIM
REBELS OF VIOLATING "CEASEFIRE" AND LAUNCHING SPATE OF ATTACKS
IN ORDER TO DERAIL JIDDA TALKS. IN DRAMATIC ABANDONMENT OF
LONG-STANDING OPTIMISTIC LINE, PRESIDENT REVEALED DETAILS OF
PREVIOUSLY UNMENTIONED MILITARY REVERSES, SAID "MUSLIM PROBLEM"
WAS SPREADING, AND VOWED THAT ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE
TO TALK WITH REBELS, IT WOULD NEVER AGREE TO SECESSION. PRESIDENT
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SAID THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD FROM MELCHOR ABOUT RESULTS OF JIDDA
TALKS BUT EXPECTS TO SHORTLY. WE ASSUME MAIN POINT OF THIS

PERFORMANCE, WHICH GOT BANNER HEADLINE TREATMENT IN MANILA PRESS, WAS TO REINFORCE JUSTIFICATION FOR "CRISIS GOVERNMENT" AND CREATE SETTING IN WHICH MUSLIMS CAN SUBSEQUENTLY BE BLAMED FOR AS-YET UNANNOUNCED APPARENT FAILURE OF JIDDA NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, MARCOS MAY HAVE GONE A BIT FAR, AND THE NOTE OF DESPAIR IN HIS RECITATION MAY RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT GOP PERFORMANCE, AS WELL AS (PERHAPS) ATTRACT PUBLIC SYMPATHY. IN SAME SPEECH PRESIDENT BEWAILED CRITICISM OF REFERENDUM (BEING REPORTED IN SEPTEL. FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF SPEECH BASED ON PRESS COVERAGE. END SUMMARY

2. PRESIDENT MARCOS BROKE LONG OFFICIAL SILENCE ON DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION IN THE SOUTH IN JAN 28 SPEECH IN WHICH HE ACCUSED REBELS OF VIOLATING ALLEGED "CEASEFIRE" IN ORDER TO DERAIL NEGOTIATIONS IN JIDDA. PRESIDEY SAID HE

HAD DECLARED HITHERTO UNPUBLICIZED "CEASEFIRE" PENDING RESULTS OF JIDDA TALKS. IN REMARKS WHICH GOT BANNER HEADLINE TREATMENT IN ALL MANILA PAPERS, PRESIDENT DRAMATICALLY REVERSED OFFICIAL LINE ON MINDANAO (WHICH AS BEEN UNADULTERATED ANODYNE UP TO NOW) AND SAID "MUSLIM PROBLEM" IS SPREADING. PRESIDENT SAID GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MEET WITH REBELS BUT WOULD NEVER ALLOW SEPARATION OF PHILIPPINE TERRITORY TO BENEFIT EITHER NEW OR EXISTING (READ FOREIGN) STATE.

3. PRESIDENT SAID THAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MELCHOR HAS NOT YET RETURNED FROM JIDDA NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT HE HAS NOT YET HEARD FROM HIM BUT EXPECTS TO SHORTLY.

4. PRESIDENT REVEALED DETAILS OF DISCOURAGING MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS (REFTEL) INCLUDING MASSACRE OF 42 CONSTABULARY IN JOLO, NOTING THAT ONE OF THE VICTIMS WAS A RELATIVE OF HIS, LT. MARCOS (DEGREE OF RELATIONSHIP NOT SPECIFIED). PRESIDENT ALSO CLAIMED THAT REBELS HAVE "TAKEN OVER" THREE TOWNS LOCATED IN THREE MAJOR MUSLIM REGIONS: TAGLIBI IN SULU (SMALL TOWN ON NORTHERN SIDE OF JOLO ISLAND), TANGKAI IN LANSONMKSMALL TOWN SOUTH OF KOLAMBUGAN IN LANAو DEL NORTE) AND TUMBAO (MARKET TOWN ON PULANGI RIVER UPSTREAM FROM COTABATO CITY).

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5. COMMENT: AS PLAYED BY LOCAL PRESS, PRESIDENT'S REMARKS HAD NOTE OF DESPAIR TINGED WITH PANIC. SUDDEN ABANDONMENT OF OPTIMISTIC LINE ON MINDAOAO MAY WELL RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT GO PERFORMANCE, ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT HAS PROBABLY ACHIEVED TACTICAL OBJECTIVE OF SETTING STAGE ON WHICH REBELS CAN SUBSEQUENTLY BE BLAMED FOR APPARENT FAILURE OF JIDDA TALKS. (GOP HAS NOT BEEN ANNOUNCING RESULTS OF TALKS.)

6. SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, HIS REFERENCE TO A "CEASEFIRE" IS PURE MALARKY. ONLY "CEASEFIRE" WE KNOW WAS RESTRICTED TO

LANAO PROVINCES ONLY, AND ACCORDING GOP'S OWN PUBLIC STATEMENTS EXPIRED ON JAN 1. IN OTHER AREAS (NOTABLY BASILAN AND COTABATO), GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN RUNNING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE REBELS BEFORE AND DURING PERIOD OF JIDDA TALKS AND THEY, OF COURSE, HAVE BEEN PAYING GOVERNMENT BACK WITH (UNISLAMIC) INTEREST.

7. WITH REGARD TO TOWNS ALLEGEDLY TAKEN OVER BY REBELS, FIRST TWO ARE RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT AND LOCATED IN AREAS WHICH WERE LONG DOMINATED BY REBELS. IN CASE OF TANGKAL WE KNOW THAT LARGE, WELL ORGANIZED REBEL FORCE HAS OCCUPIED AREA SINCE MID-DECEMBER. HOWEVER, FALL OF THIRD TOWN, TUMBAO, WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT SETBACK. AT LAST WORD TUMBAO WAS BEING FLOODED WITH REFUGEES (UP TO 20,000 ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS) AS RESULT OF FIGHTING IN SURROUNDING AREAS, BUT WE HAVE NOT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THAT TOWN ITSELF (AS OPPOSED TO SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE) IS NOW IN REBEL HANDS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT PRESIDENT DID NOT CHOOSE TO REVEAL MUSLIM MASSACRE OF UP TO 80 CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES AT LOGGING CAMP NEAR CURUAN (ZAMBOANGA AREA) WHICH WE KNOW TOOK PLACE IN EARLY JANUARY AND WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SEVERAL WIRE SERVICE STORIES NOT PUBLISHED HERE. THIS GRISLY EPISODE COULD BE PLAYED AS EVIDENCE OF MUSLIM ATROCITIES, AND PRESIDENT MAY BE HOLDING IT IN RESERVE TO COUNTER PRO-MUSLIM ALLEGATIONS OF GOP ATROCITIES.

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